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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

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WHITE HOUSE COMMS. DIR. DUBKE RESIGNS

Mike Dubke, a veteran GOP strategist and entrepreneur who's served as White House communications director since early March, has resigned from his post after less than three months on the job, the White House announced this morning.

Dubke, 47, was not part of Trump's transition team, and accepted the role of White House communications director in February, officially assuming the position in March. He succeeded Jason Miller, who formerly oversaw the communications operation of Ted Cruz's presidential bid last year before holding an advisory role in the Trump campaign. Miller, who was named communications director in December, **resigned only days after landing the position.** In the ensuing months until Dubke's appointment, communications director duties had been handled by White House press secretary Sean Spicer.



Mike Dubke

The White House said that Dubke had submitted his resignation several weeks ago, but stayed on until after President Trump's trip to the Middle East and Europe, which concluded over Memorial Day weekend. The White House did not announce a departure date for Dubke, but chief of staff Reince Priebus said Dubke "will remain on board until a transition is concluded." Spicer will also once again field double duties until a replacement is found.

Prior to joining the White House, Dubke founded Republican media services firm Crossroads Media, which provides strategy and ad services for political candidates and conservative groups such as GOP operative Karl Rove's super PAC American Crossroads. Dubke later co-founded D.C.-based communications and public affairs firm Black Rock Group. Politico today reported that Dubke plans to return to BRG.

Dubke in a statement today said "It has been my great honor to serve President Trump and this administration," and that it has been a "distinct pleasure to work side-by-side, day-by-day with the staff of the communications and press departments."

The Washington Post and other media outlets also reported that Dubke in an email to friends said his reasons for the untimely departure were "personal."

Dubke's departure comes amid widespread speculation that a larger shakeup within Trump's communications team is imminent, as the looming crisis involving investigations into the Trump Administration's possible collusion with Russia to rig the 2016 election appears to acquire new revelatory details with each passing week.

Spicer is one such staffer whose future on Trump's team has been the subject of much speculation, with

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WALKER SANDS HELPS BRIDGE IT GENDER GAP

Tech has historically been considered a man's field, but CompTIA (Computing Technology Industry Association) and Walker Sands set out to change this mentality with their #MakeTechHerStory national campaign to bridge the IT gender gap.

Tech PR specialist **Walker Sands** put together focus groups for girls ages 10 to 17 to talk about tech, careers, and what an IT professional looks like.

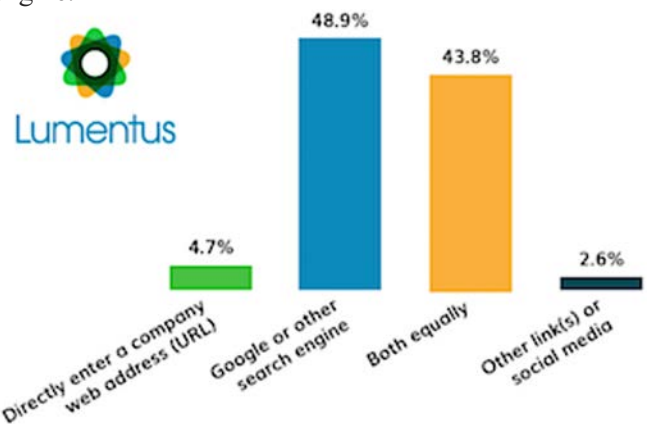
This data was then used to challenge the perception young girls have toward a career in tech by illustrating stories of successful women through an e-book, social campaign and interactive avatar generator of a modernized version of **Rosie the Riveter** from the 1940s. Girls were encouraged to share their version of Rosie on social media.

The campaign generated 180 media placements, 35,000 video views, 600,000 social shares and 250M+ media impressions.



GOOGLE IS YOUR FRONT DOOR

Most companies rely solely on their own websites to shape public perception, but more attention should be paid to the top 10 results that come up when either their names or some variation or abbreviation is entered into a search engine.



Results when respondents were asked what their preferred method is for searching online for information about a company, its products, or services.

The latest **poll by Lumentus**, a digital marketing and communications firm, shows that 70 percent of American decision-makers and managers rely on search engine

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WHITE HOUSE COMMS. DIR. DUBKE RESIGNS

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many outlets reporting that he may soon take on a less publicly-visible role.

The Washington Post also reported today that former campaign manager Corey Lewandowski, who quit the Trump team after the election, could rejoin Trump's inner circle to handle communications responses to Russia-related inquiries. Also making a possible return is conservative political activist David Bossie, who was formerly Trump's deputy campaign manager.

Bossie, speaking with "Fox & Friends" this morning, said he believes the media is out to "destroy" Trump.

GOOGLE IS YOUR FRONT DOOR

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results in making business decisions. Fewer than five percent rely on an organization's website alone.

"Google is now your front door, not your own website," Laurence Moskowitz, chief executive of Lumentus, told *O'Dwyer's*. Nearly 50 percent of respondents prefer to initiate a search on a company, product or service on Google; fewer than five percent prefer to go directly to a corporate website first.

Other sobering results include:

- More than 80 percent avoid a company or individual on the basis of negative search results.
- Nearly 75 percent have actually rejected doing business with companies as a result of negative search results.
- 75 percent will dig deeper if they find negative information about a company they are researching.

Online news articles still carry great credibility, with more than 83 percent of those surveyed trusting this content compared to 77 percent trusting corporate website content.

ONLINE TRAFFIC SOURCES HINGE ON TOPIC

Publishers routinely spend a dizzying amount of time refining and retooling algorithms in an attempt to improve search engine optimization, but do they ever consider how an article's subject matter influences where readers are likely to find it?

A recent analysis of more than 10 million online articles by technology company Parse.ly



sheds some light on [how readers find their way to articles on the Internet](#). An article's likely referral sources vary widely depending on its subject, and understanding where audiences are most likely to stumble upon a particular story offers invaluable insights to publishers and marketers looking to drive readership and improve visibility.

For example, articles focusing on entertainment get an inordinate amount of their traffic from Facebook, accounting for 61 percent of external referrer traffic versus Google search, at 29 percent. For articles focusing on lifestyle, the scales are even more unbalanced, drawing 87 percent of their external traffic from Facebook, versus only about seven percent from Google. Similar trends can be seen in articles focusing on education and U.S. presidential politics, which both receive 59 percent of their traffic from Facebook versus 21 and 25 percent from Google, respectively.

[Read the rest of this story on *odwyerpr.com*](#)

COMBATTING 'FAKE NEWS'

By Fraser Seitel, comms. consultant, author and teacher for 40 years



"Fake news" is in the eye of the beholder. For example, if you think it's no big deal that Jared Kushner may have attempted to set up a back channel with the Russians to fight ISIS in Syria, then you'd probably brand all the media echo chamber hysteria incriminating the President's son-in-law as "fake news." Today's "fake news" is just a natural extension of the steady diminution of journalistic standards over the past two decades.

Journalists used to champion "objectivity" in reporting. But with the growth of Fox News on the right and MSNBC on the left and with proliferating, one-sided web sites billing themselves as "sources of news," it was probably inevitable that media pillars which at least tried to be "neutral" — from *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* to CNN and NBC — would eventually throw in the towel and willingly display their bias. (If you disagree, tune in to "NBC Nightly News" any evening and watch how thoroughly its Washington reporters excoriate all things Trump.)

So, if even traditional sources of journalism have been declared one-sided under the new reportorial law of the land, how can an organization caught in the "fake news" cross-hairs confront and combat it? Here are a few suggestions, which run counter to the traditional public relations advice of treating the media as "friendly adversaries."

Don't hide

CEOs — particularly those making tens of millions of dollars annually — are notoriously reluctant to mix it up with critics. Unlike the old days when corporate citizens with names like Rockefeller and Wriston, Welch and Iacocca regularly stood up for what they stood for, today's CEOs are generally fraidy scared. They avoid the media, refrain from giving speeches or testimony and try to keep out of public view.

Staying silent, of course, is the worst strategy if your organization is confronted by "fake news." As they say, "Silence grants the point." So, a good CEO doesn't hide in the face of fake news; he or she fights back, in public.

That's exactly what JP Morgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon does every time his institution or his industry is challenged by fake news purveyors. For instance, while other bank CEOs shrink in the face of a withering fusillade from their primary Congressional critic, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Jamie Dimon rises up. When Warren calls for breaking up the banks or imposing increased banking regulation, Dimon dismisses the gentle lady's venom with a simple, "She doesn't understand the global banking system."

Strike back quickly

With social media humming and biased websites churning out copy by the minute, the adage, "If you snooze, you lose," has never been truer.

News with no basis in fact must be shut down immediately, before it has momentum to metastasize on the web. That's what Pepsi didn't do when its chairman was falsely accused of telling victorious Trump supporters to "take their business elsewhere." What she really said was, "The election is over ... we should mourn, for those of us who supported the other side. But we have to come together and life has to go on." When Pepsi failed to react quickly enough to the fake news, the company became the focus of a boycott.

When New Balance's spokesman harmlessly suggested

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COMBATTING 'FAKE NEWS'

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that “things will move in the right direction” after the presidential election, a white supremacist website quickly declared the shoe company “the official brand of the Trump Revolution.”

Hoo boy! New Balance immediately released a statement that it “does not tolerate bigotry or hate in any form.” And the fake news was quashed.

Fight fire with fire

When aspersions are publicly cast against their institutions, most CEOs, on the advice of lawyers, barrel into the bunker and hope the whole thing blows over.

But in this day of hyper partisanship, media bias and phony news websites, such an avoidance strategy rarely works. The better advice is to strike back in kind.

That’s what Exxon Mobil did when faced with accusations that literally threatened its viability. Oil companies, of course, are not known for their propensity to engage in public battles. But when Exxon found itself on the wrong end of media, website and government conspiracy theorists, who charged it with withholding climate information the same way tobacco companies withheld damning data on cigarettes and cancer, the company wisely struck back.

When New York’s perpetually-campaigning Attorney General Eric Schneiderman launched an investigation, based on anti-Exxon press articles, the company vigorously defended itself and filed a lawsuit, questioning the motives of Schneiderman and other attorneys general he recruited for his high profile Exxon witch hunt.

Get nasty

In such cases when fake news accusations jeopardize the very lifeblood of the corporate body, even the nicest, most customer-friendly CEOs must take off the gloves and show their fangs.

Few, for example, are more wholesome than Hamdi Ulukaya, founder of the all-natural Chobani yogurt company. Mr. Ulukaya, a Turkish immigrant himself, invests heavily in his yogurt-making factory communities, where he also employs hundreds of refugees. This doesn’t sit well with the anti-immigrant component of the political right wing.

So, when right wing conspiratorial hero Alex Jones, proprietor of a radio show, YouTube channel and the InfoWars.com blog, claimed that Chobani’s Idaho factory was connected to a 2016 child sexual assault and a rise in tuberculosis cases, Ulukaya took off the gloves.

He sued Jones in April for “false” and “defamatory” statements and “actual malice” to harm Chobani’s reputation and damage its business. Jones immediately vowed to fight the legal action to the end and appealed to followers to help him defeat the “cold blooded globalists” attacking him.

Chobani’s Ulukaya held his ground, and a month later, the sputtering Jones folded like a rented mule, settling the lawsuit and retracting his previous statements about the company.

In the Age of Trump, with half the country steadfastly supporting the President’s agenda and the other half fiercely opposing it, the trend toward pronounced media bias and more frequent fake news will continue.

Faced with such attacks, smart organizations and individuals have little choice but to fight back. Are you listening Jared Kushner?

PN TO HELP PROMOTE BENEFITS OF HONEY

Porter Novelli has been named PR agency of record for industry-funded agriculture promotion group, National Honey Board.

PN will support the group’s mission to provide education on honey by managing its consumer brand with strategic plan development, media and influencer relations and counsel on current issues and trends.

“It’s an honor to be collaborating with the National Honey Board as they continue to educate the public on the nutritional information, benefits and uses for honey and honey products,” said Linda Martin, APR, partner and managing director, Porter Novelli Southern California.

NHB dedicates a minimum of five percent of its annual budget to support honey bee health research.



FWV REPS ECOMMERCE FRAUD COMPANY

French/West/Vaughan, one of the nation’s leading independent PR firms and **largest in the Southeast**, has been named agency of record by Chargebacks911, a Tampa, Florida-based cyber-security company that protects eCommerce businesses against fraudulent credit payment chargebacks.

This type of fraud is often referred to as cyber-shoplifting or “friendly fraud” and costs online retailers \$40 billion in lost revenue each year.

A chargeback occurs when, instead of contacting the retailer, a buyer demands and receives a refund from the credit card company, bypassing the merchant and often keeping the product, resulting in compound losses.

“Chargeback fraud is the fastest-growing problem in e-Commerce,” said Monica Eaton-Cardone, founder and COO of Chargebacks911. “Having FWV on board to help generate awareness for this invisible and under-reported crisis will help us reach business operators who are exposed to potentially catastrophic risk.”

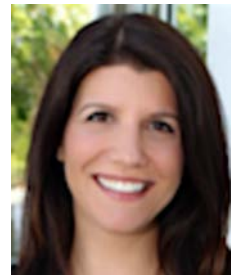
With proprietary software technology and more than 400 specialists across North America, Europe and Asia, Chargebacks911 helps safeguard over 2.4 billion online transactions each year.



BERGER BECOMES BOARDROOMPR ACCT. DIR.

Ft. Lauderdale-based agency **BoardroomPR** has named Lauren Berger an account director.

She joins the agency from Florida ABC affiliate WPLG Channel 10, where she was a dayside executive producer and was responsible for managing reporters, news producers and writers. She was previously a senior producer and special projects producer at WPEC WPEC CBS12 in West Palm Beach and a senior producer and production coordinator at ABC Newschannel 27 in Tallahassee.



Lauren Berger

Berger will work on several accounts at the agency, which focuses on real estate, law, finance and nonprofits.

“Gender pay gap” is the biggest issue on the agenda of Women in PR USA, a new sister organization of Women in PR Canada, says WPRC chairwoman and president Talia Davis.

WPR USA, which is taking part in the Global PR Summit at One World Trade Center June 8-9, will launch at a reception from 5-8 p.m. **Friday, June 9 at the Novotel Times Square.**

The new group, said Davis, plans to build chapters throughout the U.S. It acknowledges the existence of New York Women in Communications but notes that its 2,000+ membership includes those from media, publishing, and other industries and is not PR-specific.

Davis heads communications at AdvantageBC, which attracts business to British Columbia, Canada.

The PR Society of America and Canadian PR Society have diverse memberships and can't be dedicated to specific goals for women in PR, it further says. PRSA, with female membership of at least 70%, switched to a board with nine men and eight women in 2017 after several years of a woman-dominated board. **The 2016 board had 12 women and five men.**

Women Executives in PR, New York, merged with Advertising Women of New York in 2006. Washington Women in PR has a **full slate of activities.**

“Women are the driving force in PR,” says Advisory Council member Deirdre Breckenridge, CEO of Pure Performance Communications and one of the founders of WPR USA. “We are not just sitting back on the sidelines and watching change,” she adds. “We are making change happen.”

Individual memberships are \$300; corporate, \$1,020, and partner, \$2,400. Men can join, and a number are active in the organization. **Forms are here.**

Women's Pay at 83% of Males—Pew

A Pew report April 3, 2017, says pay of women employees in the U.S. in 2016 was 83% of pay for males, a **slight gain over the 80% found for 2015.**

The “PR Women Who Changed History” program March 9 in New York included statistics provided by Weber Shandwick that showed **disparity in PR pay and titles.**

The ten largest PR firms, as ranked by several sources, employ 32,851 worldwide and 12,646 in the U.S., but none is headed by a woman.

Women are nearly 70% of PR firm employees but hold only 30% of top positions, according to *The Holmes Report*. Only 11% of ad agency creative directors are women.

Women have 52% of all professional jobs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and earn almost 60% of all undergraduate and master's degrees.



Talia Davis

While they are 78% of those in healthcare, only 15% are in senior executive posts and none are CEOs.

Women have 54% of financial services jobs but only 12% are executives and none are CEOs, according to the Center for American Progress.

Muriel Fox, who co-founded the National Organization for Women in 1966 while working as a VP at Carl Byoir & Assocs., told the March 9 meeting, “Today communications rules the world. It is the most important factor in deciding the fate of people everywhere. In fact, communication will decide the fate of the whole human race.”

Women are especially suited for PR because they are usually better at communications, perhaps because of their hormones and their ability to understand the needs and desires of others,” she said.

Need for National Organization Cited

“Our collective goal for Women in PR USA is to educate the PR leaders of tomorrow about where the industry is going, key technological changes, and traditional PR beliefs that need an upgrade,” said **Rebekah Iliff**, chief strategy officer, **AirPR**. “PR isn't what it used to be, and part of our job as organizational leaders is to support one another in moving the conversation forward.”

WPR USA said, “The expansion of the organization in the USA marks an important milestone in efforts to educate women in PR and to help them advance in the field across North America. One of the main goals when forming this organization was to provide a place for women to thrive earlier in their careers and to strengthen the capabilities of established PR leaders. Now more than ever, fostering growth and mentorship plays a guiding role in the longevity of our industry.”

Natasha Koifman, President, **NKPR Inc.**, said, “The success of our company has been a result of being able to evolve and adapt in a constantly changing landscape. On a global level, we are in the midst of an incredible shift because of social media and advances in technology.”

Shannon Furey, PR Director, **M studio**, said, “Women in PR USA is focused on elevating women and is comprised of dynamic, industry-leading PR professionals. True success comes only when we support one another. We are working to close the industry's leadership gap and support the next generation of women PR leaders.”

Members of the Advisory Council of the new group include Elisha McCallum, VP, Fleishman-Hillard; Gini Dietrich, CEO of Arment Dietrich and author of the book and blog Spin Sucks; Michelle Messenger Garrett, CEO, Garrett PR, and Alyssa Barry, investor relations consultant.

Directors are located in cities across the USA: Deirdre Breckenridge (New Jersey), Shonali Burke (Washington, DC), Gini Dietrich (Chicago, IL), Abbie Fink (Phoenix, AZ), Shannon Furey (NJ), Michelle Garrett (Columbus, OH), Rebekah Iliff (San Francisco, CA), Crosby Noricks (San Diego, CA), and Nicole Rodrigues (Los Angeles, CA).

PR for Women in PR Canada is being handled by Pink Pearl PR, Vancouver.
— **Jack O'Dwyer**